

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Funeral and Memorial Handbook



532 Country Day Road
Goldsboro, NC 27534
919-735-0128 • www.goodshepherdgoldsboro.org

Approved by Council October 2024
Effective November 1, 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Funeral Services at Good Shepherd	4
Purpose of Funeral and Memorial Services	4
Types of Services	4
Church Personnel Involved in Your Service Planning:	5
Fees & Honoraria	5
Days and Times for Funerals.....	6
Good Shepherd Columbarium	6
Gift Designations & Memorials	6
Funeral Reception	7
The Funeral Service.....	8
The Funeral Liturgy	8
Music.....	9
Scripture.....	10
Homilies	11
Holy Communion.....	11
Memories and Eulogies	11
Social & Fraternal Societies.....	11
Military Honors	11
Bulletins.....	12
Pall	12
Flowers.....	12
Receiving Guests & Guestbook.....	12
Visitation.....	12
Recording/Photography	13

Introduction

Dear friends,

A Christian funeral is a celebration of baptism, resurrection, and new life in Christ. Our baptismal covenant reminds us that we are bound to life in Christ and united with him in death and resurrection! A funeral or memorial service provides family and friends with an opportunity to remember one of God's own children and find hope in God's Word and eternal life-giving power. Christians will strive to keep the gospel hope of the resurrection at the center of all observances associated with the death of a Christian.

“At a person's death, the church shares the grief of those who mourn and remembers the brevity of life on earth. At the funeral we give voice to sorrow, thank God for our loved one, and entrust this companion of ours into the hands of God. Trusting in God's promise in baptism that we are claimed by the cross of Christ forever, we rest in the sure hope of the resurrection. When the church gathers to mark the end of life, Christ crucified and risen is the witness of worship, the strength of mutual consolation and the hope of healing.”

Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Augsburg Fortress Publishers. 2006.

Sharing God's Love during times of grief is one of the great privileges a church is given.

We want this booklet to be more than a list of details. We also hope for it to be a statement of our pledge to guide you and your loved ones with the Good News of faith in the resurrection of our Lord, which unfolds in the prayers, songs, message and scripture chosen for a funeral service.

May the peace and consolation of our Lord, Jesus Christ, bring light and hope to all of us who walk in and through the shadow of death.

Peace,

The Staff of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Funeral Services at Good Shepherd

Purpose of Funeral and Memorial Services

In death, grief and loss are real and not to be minimized. As a Christian community, we are privileged to walk with our brothers and sisters in times of sorrow, pointing to the hope that comes in Jesus and the promise of life everlasting with him.

While loved ones will be remembered in this service, they will be remembered as children of God. Most importantly, we will remember and celebrate what Jesus Christ did for them and for us. With that in mind, a funeral or memorial service is worship — our worship of the God who gives us life, binds us in relationship, extends his goodness and grace, and welcomes us into eternal life.

Types of Services

Funeral Service

A funeral service is conducted when remains are present in a casket or as ashes in an urn.

Memorial Service

A memorial service is conducted when no remains are present. This type of service is preferable when remains are unavailable or the service is celebrated a significant time after the death.

Committal

The Committal is a brief service with readings and prayers committing a body in casket or urn to the ground. Committal generally follows the funeral service. When the committal involves a casket, it is called an “interment.” When it involves ashes, it is called an “inurnment.”

Visitation

A visitation is a time when family members receive condolences and well-wishes of friends and loved ones. When desired, the body is present for viewing.

Church Personnel Involved in Your Service Planning:

Officiating Pastor

The officiating pastor will meet with the family to discuss the date, develop the funeral bulletin and plan the service. This will include music, Bible passage(s), tributes and other participants, like pall/urn bearers and readers. In addition, the pastor will spend time listening to stories about the deceased in order to prepare a message that is unique to the individual.

Musician

The church musician is highly skilled in playing organ and/or piano, along with leading congregational singing and providing beautiful special music solos. The musician can also accompany a friend or relative who desires sharing special music.

Funeral Reception Coordinator

The funeral reception coordinator(s) will assist you in planning the space for memorabilia, flowers, photos and slideshow. If the family chooses to have a reception following the funeral service, the coordinator(s) will assist in helping you choose your preferred reception option. The coordinators ensure kitchen help is provided to serve and clean-up.

Sound Technician

A sound technician is present to ensure audio and video needs are met.

Parish Administrator

The parish administrator will often become the contact person for the family to provide messages for staff and drop off items to be used at the funeral. The parish administrator also prepares and prints the bulletins.

Fees & Honoraria

It is customary to give an honorarium to those serving and helping you in this process. These are normally paid through the funeral director. If a funeral home is not being utilized, the family can pay these by check made out to each individual on the day of the funeral.

Suggested honorarium amounts are:

Pastor	\$250-300
Musician	\$150-200
Soloist	\$100-125
Sound Technician	\$50-75

Days and Times for Funerals

Funerals are held at the convenience of the family, normally within a few days following death. Please note that funerals will not be celebrated on Sundays or principal festivals and observances including Holy Week.

Good Shepherd Columbarium

Good Shepherd has an outdoor columbarium in its memorial garden. It provides a dignified, quiet, and reflective place for loved ones to visit and remember. Please contact the church office for information on the columbarium.

Gift Designations & Memorials

In response to the goodness of God and in gratitude for the life of the deceased, you may choose to designate financial contributions/memorials be made in memory of the deceased. This often happens in lieu of flowers. Common choices are:

- Good Shepherd General Fund: This fund covers our day-to-day operating and ministry expenses.
- Good Shepherd Designated Fund: A fund that allows the church to use funds for a specific, designated purpose at the family's request. Please consult with the pastor before choosing a designated fund.
- Good Shepherd Benevolent Fund: An endowed fund where memorial gifts are invested and the interest is given annually to ministries within and beyond Good Shepherd.
- Other Community Organizations

Funeral Reception

Gathering with family for comfort and support can be particularly helpful in times of grief. Our fellowship team will be happy to assist with any requested fellowship before or after the service at the church as follows.

Option 1: Assorted Dessert and Beverage Reception

Coffee, lemonade, tea, and water are served along with assorted donated desserts provided by members of the church. There is no cost to members for this service.

Option 2: Extended Finger Food Reception

Coffee, lemonade, tea, and water are served along with assorted donated desserts provided by members of the church as in option 1. The family may provide additional items at their expense such as fruit, cheese and crackers, chips and salsa, and deli meats for our volunteers to serve.

Option 3: Hot or Cold Meal

The family may provide at their expense a full meal to be served by our volunteers. The church will still provide beverages and desserts at no cost as outlined in option 1.

For all receptions, GSLC will provide all paper products at no cost to the family and will provide volunteers to set up, serve, and clean up. After the reception, families are invited to take any remaining food with them. If a family chooses not to take the remaining food with them, it will be used for other purposes as those serving the meal see fit. All receptions will be held in the Fellowship Hall and all guests will be invited to participate.

The Funeral Service

The Funeral Liturgy

The liturgy used for services is usually from the ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) worship book. The service features hymns, scripture readings, prayers, homily, and a commendation.

Generally, it follows this format:

Gathering

The pastor(s) and family gather in the Narthex with the casket or cremains for the opening prayer and Thanksgiving for Baptism. A pall is placed over the casket or cremains.

Gathering Hymn

When the first hymn begins, the pastor and family process into the sanctuary.

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

Scripture Readings

Homily

Hymn

Apostles' Creed

Prayers

Holy Communion (optional)

Lord's Prayer

Sending/Closing Hymn

After the words of Commendation, the final hymn begins; and the casket or cremains, pastor(s), and family members proceed to the cemetery, columbarium, or reception.

Committal

(at the graveside)

Benediction

Music

The Director of Music or an appointed substitute will play for the service. Any outside musicians or vocalists need to consult with the Minister of Music to discuss appropriate music selections and the worshipful nature of the service. In general, secular music is not appropriate during the service.

Suggested hymns include:

Any of the Easter hymns (ELW 361-394)

Any of the Hope, Assurance hymns (ELW 618-639), especially “Abide with Me” (ELW 629) plus the following:

- Love Has Come (ELW 292)
- Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross (ELW 335)
- Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! (ELW 413)
- For All the Saints (ELW 422)
- Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand (ELW 441)
- The King of Love My Shepherd Is (ELW 502)
- A Mighty Fortress is Our God (ELW 504)
- My Hope is Built on Nothing Less (ELW 596, 597)
- Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling (ELW 608)
- The Church’s One Foundation (ELW 654)
- Blest Be the Tie that Binds (ELW 656)
- Lift High the Cross (ELW 660)
- What Wondrous Love is This (ELW 666)
- Goodness is Stronger than Evil (ELW 721)
- Morning Cry (ELW 732)
- Eternal Father, Strong to Save (ELW 756)
- My Faith Looks Up to Thee (ELW 759)
- Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound (ELW 779)
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (ELW 836)
- Beautiful Savior (ELW 838)
- Now Thank We All Our God (ELW 840)
- Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart! (ELW 873)
- For the Beauty of the Earth (ELW 879)
- God Beyond All Praising (ELW 880)
- Let All Things Now Living (ELW 881)

Scripture

There are usually 2-3 Bible readings during the service. The readings selected can be a powerful reminder of God's grace, ever-present support, and promise of new life. The reading of scripture is an appropriate time to have friends/family involved in the service. When choosing a Bible reading for a funeral, it is helpful to ask, "What passage from scripture was a favorite? What passage from scripture proclaims much needed Good News? What passage from scripture describes your loved one's relationship with God?"

The officiating pastor will be happy to choose the Bible passages if any are not given/requested by the family. S/He hears the family stories and can draw on which scripture to tell. Below are some suggested texts that are common to funeral/memorial services. Please don't be limited by the following list. It serves only as a starting point.

SUGGESTED BIBLE READINGS

Old Testament:

Genesis 1:26-28
Genesis 2:15-24
Genesis 50:15-21
Isaiah 40:1-11
Isaiah 40:27-31
Isaiah 42:5-17
Ezekiel 34:11-16
Job 19:23-27
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Zechariah 8:1-8

Psalms

Psalms 16:1,5-11
Psalm 23
Psalm 34:1-8
Psalm 42:1-7
Psalm 46:1-7
Psalm 90
Psalm 103:1-5, 10-18
Psalm 121
Psalm 130
Psalm 143

Gospels

Matthew 11:25-30
Matthew 25:1-13
Luke 7:11-17
Luke 12:35-40
Luke 23:32-43
John 5:24-29
John 10:7-16
John 11:21-27
John 14:1-6

Epistles:

Romans 5:1-11
Romans 5:17-21
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39
1 Corinthians 15:12-26
Ephesians 3:14-21
Philippians 2:5-11
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Hebrews 11:32-12:2
1 Peter 1:3-9
1 John 4:7-21
Revelation 7:9-17
Revelation 21:2-7

Homilies

A homily will be offered at the worship service by the Pastor. This is a time to remember our loved one and to boldly proclaim the Good News of the gospel. If a guest preacher is desired, prior arrangements must be made with our pastor.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion can be meaningful for those still on their earthly journey. The sacrament of Holy Communion was given by Christ for the sake of creating and sustaining faith. We believe that in the sacrament Christ is fully present with us, meeting us in our grief, sorrow, sin, and suffering. Further, Holy Communion gives us a foretaste of the feast to come in the kingdom of God with all the saints.

Please arrange with the pastor if you would like Holy Communion to be part of the funeral/memorial service. The Altar Guild will make sure that the table is set and prepared for the service.

Memories and Eulogies

Occasionally a family member or friend will want to share a few remembrances (eulogy) about the one who has died. Although the service is complete without a eulogy, it can sometimes provide helpful context. The eulogy is normally limited to one person and is expected not to exceed five minutes.

Social & Fraternal Societies

The worship service is meant to give glory to God and comfort to the bereaved. The worship service is not an occasion to support, augment or complement non-church organizations and rituals. Any ritual or rite apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments is not appropriate within the liturgies of the Lutheran Church. Therefore, no social/fraternal society rituals will be included in the service in the sanctuary or at the graveside committal. Once the committal has been concluded, the family may observe social and fraternal society rites as they deem appropriate.

Military Honors

Any ritual or rite apart from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments is not appropriate within the liturgies of the Lutheran Church. If there is a graveside committal as part of the service, military honors are most appropriate at the graveside following the rite of committal.

Bulletins

The church office will produce your service bulletins, if desired. Bulletins will contain an outline of the service, participants, reception announcement (if applicable) and an obituary of the deceased.

Pall

All caskets must be closed for the burial service, but may be open during the viewing (or preceding the viewing, for the family only), if desired. When closed, the church funeral pall covers the casket. This white drape recalls the white robe that is the garment of the baptized, and serves as a reminder that, through baptism, we have “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Flower sprays or national flags are not to be used in the worship service. A flag or flower spray may be used at visitation or the graveside if desired.

During the service, the casket is to be placed in the position with the feet toward the altar. The position reflects the accustomed role of the deceased in the church: facing the altar as part of the congregation. The paschal candle, which symbolizes Christ’s triumph over the powers of death, is lit and placed near the casket as a reminder of the deceased’s baptism into Christ.

Flowers

Flowers can be an important image and symbol of the hoped-for promise of resurrection. Flowers can be ordered directly by the family. These may be placed on either side of the altar or arranged in the narthex or the fellowship hall.

Receiving Guests & Guestbook

The funeral home will usually provide a guestbook for the funeral. If you are not working with a funeral home and would like to have a guestbook, this will need to be provided by the family. The family may choose to receive guests formally or informally after the service. We will move the family to the narthex/fellowship hall area so that guests may partake in the reception and greet the family.

Visitation

Although these are usually held in conjunction with the funeral home, Good Shepherd is fully prepared to host visitations. The visitation provides an opportunity for family and friends to share their condolences personally. You can choose to have a visitation at the funeral home the afternoon or evening before the worship service or at the church an hour or two prior to the funeral/memorial service. The visitation is a great time to display memorabilia and photos, poster boards and/or video. It is appropriate to have a memorial table(s) at the visitation, filled with memories and photographs of the loved one. The funeral home is usually happy to help set this up. If you need our assistance, please speak with the Pastor.

Recording/Photography

At request, the service may be videotaped and made available to the family. However, no flash photography is permitted during the funeral/memorial service.